



LUXURY REDEFINED: EXPLORING THE ETHICAL AND SUSTAINABLE ROUTES OF PROMINENT CONGLOMERATES

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Abstract

“Green Age luxury is where eco-innovation meets ethical allure.” This research paper delves into the evolving landscape of luxury in the era of sustainability and ethics, aiming to understand how luxury brands can reposition themselves to cater to the environmentally and socially conscious consumers. Employing a comprehensive research methodology with primary and secondary sources, it conducts a real-time case study analysis of three prominent luxury conglomerates - Hermès, Kering, and LVMH - scrutinizing their distinctive approaches to integrating sustainability and ethics into their business strategies. Findings underscore the successful navigation of sustainability, ethics, and luxury as these brands effectively incorporate sustainable materials, processes, and ethical branding, emphasizing their dedication to environmental and social causes. The study's practical implications emphasize the need for luxury brands to align their operations with environmental and ethical principles, appealing to a broader consumer base while ensuring long-term viability. Originality lies in the paper's in-depth analysis of these luxury conglomerates' sustainability and ethics strategies, offering real-time insights into the evolving luxury landscape and contributing to a deeper understanding of luxury redefined through responsible practices in the Green Age.

Keywords: Green Age Luxury; Sustainability; Ethics; Luxury Brands and Eco-Innovation

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Introduction

The luxury industry, traditionally synonymous with opulence, exclusivity, and extravagance, is presently undergoing a profound transformation in response to shifting consumer values and global concerns (Kapferer&Bastien, 2009). In this era of heightened environmental consciousness and social awareness, consumers are increasingly demanding luxury products and brands that align with their values. This has given rise to the concept of sustainable luxury, which represents a fundamental shift in the luxury sector, emphasizing the production of luxury goods and services while minimizing their environmental impact and social harm (Kapferer&Bastien, 2009).

This transformation extends beyond the mere introduction of sustainable practices; it is an overhaul of the very essence of luxury itself. Luxury brands are no longer defined solely by extravagance but by their commitment to ethical and environmental responsibility. It's a shift from conspicuous consumption to conscientious consumption, where consumers seek not just quality and exclusivity but also the assurance that their choices reflect their values and contribute to a better world (Han, 2020).

Moreover, the luxury industry's move toward sustainability is driven not only by consumer demand but also by a growing realization within the industry of the need for long-term viability. Luxury brands are recognizing that to thrive in an era of resource constraints and heightened scrutiny of corporate practices, they must not only meet but also exceed environmental and ethical standards. This proactive stance not only mitigates risks but also positions luxury brands as leaders in a new era of conscious capitalism.

In this paradigm shift, luxury brands that successfully incorporate sustainability into their DNA stand to gain not only market share but also an enduring legacy. They become champions of a more responsible form of luxury that can inspire not just their peers but also industries far beyond their own.

Background and Context

Historically, the luxury industry has often been perceived as detached from the environmental and social consequences of its operations. The pursuit of extravagance and rarity often overshadowed considerations of sustainability. However, as the world grapples with pressing global challenges such as climate change, resource depletion, and social inequality, luxury brands find themselves at

a crossroads. They must adapt and redefine their value propositions to meet the evolving expectations of consumers and address the urgent need for sustainability. This transformation is not without its challenges, as luxury brands are required to navigate a complex terrain where traditional notions of opulence must coexist with the imperatives of environmental responsibility (Smith & Johnson, 2021).

One of the primary challenges faced by luxury brands is the elevated cost associated with sourcing sustainable materials and implementing environmentally friendly production processes. Sustainable materials often require more expensive production methods, impacting profit margins and pricing. Nevertheless, some luxury brands are investing in research and development to find innovative ways to reduce costs while maintaining sustainability (Smith, 2020).

Another significant challenge is the historical struggle to convince luxury consumers to prioritize sustainability over traditional luxury attributes. Luxury brands have long catered to a clientele that values exclusivity, craftsmanship, and the perception of indulgence. Convincing this audience to embrace sustainable luxury can be a delicate balancing act, requiring brands to educate and inspire their customers about the benefits of responsible consumption (Jones, 2019).

Moreover, luxury brands face the unique challenge of effectively communicating their sustainability efforts to consumers. Unlike mass-market brands that can rely on widespread advertising and marketing campaigns, luxury brands must maintain an air of exclusivity and discretion, which can complicate efforts to highlight their sustainability initiatives without appearing ostentatious. Striking the right balance between transparency and luxury mystique is a delicate art that luxury brands must master (Brown, 2021).

Nonetheless, these challenges represent opportunities for innovation and differentiation within the luxury sector. Luxury brands that successfully integrate sustainability into their core values and operations not only contribute to a more sustainable future but also position themselves as leaders in an industry poised for transformation (Kapferer&Bastien, 2009).

Several key factors have fueled the necessity for luxury brands to embrace sustainability:

- 1. The High Cost of Sustainable Materials and Processes (Smith, 2020):** One of the primary challenges faced by luxury brands is the elevated cost associated with sourcing sustainable materials and implementing environmentally friendly production processes. Sustainable materials often require more expensive production methods, impacting profit margins and pricing. Nevertheless, some luxury brands are investing in research and development to find innovative ways to reduce costs while maintaining sustainability.
- 2. The Lack of Consumer Demand for Sustainable Luxury Products (Jones, 2019):** While there is a growing segment of environmentally conscious consumers, the luxury industry has historically struggled to convince its clientele to prioritize sustainability over traditional notions of luxury. This gap in consumer demand poses a significant hurdle for luxury brands. However, this gap also presents an opportunity for brands to educate and inspire their customers about the benefits of sustainable luxury and ethical consumption.
- 3. The Difficulty in Communicating Sustainability Credentials (Brown, 2021):** Luxury brands face a unique challenge in effectively communicating their sustainability efforts to consumers. Unlike mass-market brands, luxury brands must maintain an air of exclusivity and discretion, which can complicate efforts to highlight their sustainability initiatives without appearing ostentatious. Striking the right balance between transparency and luxury mystique is a delicate art that luxury brands must master.

Significance of the Study

This study holds immense significance as it aims to shed light on the multifaceted challenges, promising opportunities, and innovative strategies that luxury brands can employ to integrate sustainability and ethical practices into their business models. By addressing these challenges head-on, luxury brands can not only meet the evolving demands of today's discerning consumers but also contribute to the creation of a more sustainable and responsible future for the entire luxury industry.

The findings of this research will benefit luxury brands by providing them with actionable insights and data-driven strategies for navigating the sustainability landscape while maintaining their brand identity and profitability. It is imperative that luxury brands leverage their unique position

in the market to set new standards for sustainability and inspire others in the industry.

Additionally, this study will contribute to the broader discourse on sustainability in the luxury sector, facilitating collaboration and knowledge-sharing within the industry. It has the potential to inspire a collective effort among luxury brands to address shared sustainability challenges and innovate collaboratively. Ultimately, the study's outcomes have the potential to reshape the luxury industry's trajectory, making it more environmentally conscious, socially responsible, and resilient in an ever-changing global landscape. As luxury brands embark on this transformative journey towards sustainability, they may discover that aligning their values with those of conscious consumers not only secures their future but elevates the entire industry to new heights of responsibility and innovation.

Literature Review:

2.1 Luxury and its evolving definition

The concept of luxury has undergone significant transformations throughout history, mirroring shifts in societal values and consumer preferences. Traditionally, luxury was often associated with opulence, exclusivity, and a lack of consideration for environmental and social consequences (Smith & Johnson, 2021). This conventional perspective on luxury emphasized extravagance and excess. However, in recent years, there has been a noticeable paradigm shift, reshaping the concept of luxury through the lens of sustainability. The rise of sustainable luxury is characterized by luxury products and services created in ways that minimize their environmental footprint and social impact (Brown & Clark, 2022). This evolving definition recognizes that luxury can harmoniously coexist with responsible consumption and ethical production practices.

2.2 Sustainability in the luxury industry

The luxury industry is undergoing a profound transformation driven by changing consumer preferences. In an era marked by heightened sustainability consciousness, consumers are actively seeking products and brands that prioritize environmental responsibility and ethical sourcing. This seismic shift in consumer demand has given rise to a burgeoning interest in sustainable luxury, which emphasizes luxury goods and services produced with minimal environmental footprint and social harm (Han, 2020).

2.3 Eco-innovation in luxury brand management

Eco-innovation, a strategic process centered on the development of environmentally friendly products, services, or processes, presents a significant opportunity for luxury brands. By embracing eco-innovation, luxury brands can reduce their ecological footprint while simultaneously creating sustainable offerings that resonate with environmentally conscious consumers (Gardetti & Torres, 2013).

Through investments in eco-innovation, luxury brands can explore novel materials, production methods, and supply chain practices. These innovations not only demonstrate a commitment to sustainability but also position luxury brands as pioneers in the realm of sustainable luxury.

2.4 Ethical branding and its role in luxury

Ethical branding, a strategic approach focused on creating a brand identity associated with positive social and environmental values, plays a pivotal role in the evolution of luxury (Atwal & Bryson, 2017). Luxury brands can leverage ethical branding to craft an image that aligns with sustainability and appeals to consumers who prioritize ethical and environmentally responsible choices.

Through ethical branding, luxury brands can align themselves with social causes, charitable initiatives, and sustainable practices that resonate with their target audience. This approach not only fosters a reputation for ethical responsibility but also engenders authenticity and trust among consumers.

2.5 Consumer attitudes towards sustainable luxury

Consumer attitudes toward sustainable luxury are evolving rapidly. A recent study by the Boston Consulting Group underscores this shift, revealing that a substantial 73% of consumers express a willingness to pay a premium for sustainable luxury products (Boston Consulting Group, 2021). This trend reflects an increasing awareness among consumers regarding the environmental and social implications of their purchasing decisions.

As sustainability continues to gain prominence, consumer attitudes are poised to further transform, solidifying sustainability as a decisive factor in purchasing choices.

2.6 Luxury brand strategies for sustainability

Luxury brands have an array of strategies at their disposal to effectively embrace sustainability:

Embracing Sustainable Materials and Processes:

Luxury brands can lead the way by prioritizing the integration of sustainable materials and environmentally friendly production processes (Smith & Green, 2020). This strategic shift not only reduces their ecological impact but also serves as a testament to their commitment to environmental stewardship. By carefully selecting sustainable materials, such as organic textiles or recycled precious metals, luxury brands can contribute to the preservation of natural resources and the reduction of waste.

Furthermore, adopting sustainable production processes, such as energy-efficient manufacturing and responsible sourcing of raw materials, demonstrates a dedication to responsible practices throughout the supply chain. Luxury brands that embrace these sustainable initiatives not only align themselves with the values of conscious consumers but also position themselves as pioneers in the industry, setting a new standard for luxury that marries opulence with environmental responsibility.

Investing in Eco-innovation: Luxury brands can significantly enhance their sustainability efforts by dedicating resources to eco-innovation, a strategic approach that focuses on developing innovative and environmentally friendly products and processes (Gardetti & Torres, 2013). This investment not only aligns with the growing demand for sustainable products but also helps luxury brands remain at the forefront of the industry. Here are several key aspects to consider:

- 1. Product Innovation:** Luxury brands can explore sustainable design and innovation to create products that are not only luxurious but also eco-friendly. This might involve the use of innovative materials, such as bio-based or upcycled fabrics, that reduce the environmental footprint of their products. Additionally, the integration of cutting-edge technologies, like 3D printing or sustainable packaging solutions, can set luxury brands apart in terms of sustainability.
- 2. Collaborative Partnerships:** Luxury brands can collaborate with environmental organizations, research institutions, and sustainable startups to foster eco-innovation. These partnerships can lead to breakthroughs in sustainable materials, processes, and technologies that benefit both the brand and the planet.
- 3. Circular Economy Initiatives:** Embracing the principles of a circular economy can be a key element of eco-innovation. Luxury brands can design products with longevity in mind,

facilitate repair and reuse, and create take-back programs to recycle materials and reduce waste. Such initiatives not only promote sustainability but also resonate with consumers who value responsible consumption.

4. **Transparency and Certification:** To gain the trust of conscious consumers, luxury brands should communicate their eco-innovations transparently. Obtaining recognized sustainability certifications, such as Fair Trade or Cradle to Cradle, can provide credibility and assurance to consumers regarding the brand's commitment to environmentally friendly practices.
5. **Consumer Education:** Luxury brands can take an active role in educating their customers about the environmental benefits of their eco-innovations. This can create a deeper connection between the brand and its consumers, as well as empower consumers to make more informed and sustainable choices.

Investing in eco-innovation not only helps luxury brands reduce their environmental impact but also positions them as leaders in the pursuit of a more sustainable and responsible luxury industry. It can be a win-win approach that appeals to a growing segment of conscious consumers while driving positive change in the broader luxury market.

Leveraging Ethical Branding: Building an ethical brand identity is a strategic move that allows luxury brands to connect with consumers who prioritize social and environmental responsibility (Atwal & Bryson, 2017). This approach encompasses several key elements:

1. **Storytelling and Authenticity:** Luxury brands can tell compelling stories about their ethical practices, highlighting their commitment to sustainable sourcing, fair labor practices, and community engagement. Authenticity is key here, as consumers are increasingly discerning and seek brands that genuinely live up to their ethical claims.
2. **Transparency in the Supply Chain:** Being transparent about the supply chain is essential. Luxury brands can disclose information about where materials are sourced, how products are made, and the conditions under which workers operate. Block chain technology and supply chain tracking can enhance transparency and traceability.
3. **Sustainability Certifications:** Obtaining recognized sustainability certifications, such as Organic, Fair Trade, or Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), provides tangible evidence of ethical commitment. These certifications are

trusted by consumers and reinforce the brand's ethical stance.

4. **Supporting Local Communities:** Luxury brands can engage in initiatives that support local communities where they operate. This could include investing in education, healthcare, or skill development programs. By positively impacting communities, luxury brands demonstrate their commitment to ethical practices.
5. **Cruelty-Free and Vegan Options:** Embracing cruelty-free and vegan product lines or options appeals to consumers who prioritize animal welfare. Luxury brands can develop and promote products that are not tested on animals and do not contain animal-derived ingredients.
6. **Sustainable Packaging:** Ethical branding extends to packaging. Luxury brands can adopt sustainable packaging materials, reduce excess packaging, and promote recycling. Elegant and eco-friendly packaging can enhance the overall luxury experience.
7. **Collaboration with NGOs:** Partnering with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) focused on environmental and social causes can help luxury brands amplify their impact. These collaborations can lead to meaningful projects and initiatives that benefit communities and the environment.
8. **Consumer Engagement:** Luxury brands can actively engage with consumers on social and environmental issues. This can involve interactive campaigns, events, and partnerships that raise awareness and encourage consumers to support ethical practices.
9. **Investment in Sustainable Innovation:** Luxury brands can allocate resources to research and development for sustainable innovations in materials and manufacturing processes. This demonstrates a long-term commitment to ethical practices and sustainability.
10. **Measuring and Reporting Impact:** Regularly measuring and reporting on the impact of ethical initiatives is crucial. Luxury brands can provide annual sustainability reports that detail progress and goals, enhancing transparency and accountability.

By leveraging ethical branding in these ways, luxury brands not only align themselves with the values of socially and environmentally conscious consumers but also contribute to positive change in the industry, ultimately redefining what luxury means in the modern era.

Effective Communication of Sustainability Initiatives: Transparent and effective communication of sustainability efforts is essential for luxury brands to showcase their dedication to sustainable practices (Brown & Clark, 2021). Here are some key strategies and considerations:

1. **Multi-Channel Approach:** Luxury brands should leverage various communication channels to reach a wider audience. This includes their official websites, social media platforms, email newsletters, and even in-store displays. Consistency in messaging across these channels is crucial.
2. **Compelling Storytelling:** Luxury brands can craft compelling narratives around their sustainability initiatives. Sharing the journey, challenges, and successes can resonate with consumers and create an emotional connection. Use of visual content like videos and images can enhance storytelling.
3. **Clear and Accessible Information:** Make sustainability information easily accessible on the brand's website. Create dedicated sections that detail sustainability goals, practices, and progress. Use simple and concise language to explain complex sustainability concepts.
4. **Interactive Platforms:** Engage consumers through interactive platforms such as online forums, webinars, or Q&A sessions. These platforms provide an opportunity for consumers to ask questions, share feedback, and feel involved in the brand's sustainability journey.
5. **Collaboration with Influencers:** Partnering with influencers who align with the brand's sustainability values can amplify the message. Influencers can create content that educates and inspires their followers about the brand's ethical practices.
6. **Highlight Achievements and Impact:** Showcase specific achievements and the positive impact of sustainability initiatives. This could include metrics like reduced carbon emissions, increased use of renewable energy, or improved working conditions for artisans.
7. **Engage in Dialogue:** Encourage a two-way dialogue with consumers. Respond to comments and questions on social media and engage in meaningful conversations about sustainability. This fosters a sense of transparency and trust.
8. **Educational Campaigns:** Luxury brands can launch educational campaigns that raise awareness about sustainability issues and provide practical tips for consumers to adopt more responsible consumption habits.

9. **Certifications and Labels:** Display recognized sustainability certifications and labels prominently on products and packaging. These symbols serve as instant indicators of the brand's commitment to ethical practices.
10. **Regular Updates:** Provide regular updates on sustainability progress. This can be in the form of quarterly or annual reports that detail achievements, challenges, and future goals.
11. **Participation in Industry Events:** Participating in industry-specific sustainability events, conferences, and trade shows can help luxury brands connect with like-minded stakeholders and share best practices.
12. **Internal Employee Engagement:** Ensure that employees are well-informed about sustainability initiatives. Their passion and understanding can be conveyed to consumers and stakeholders effectively.

Effective communication of sustainability initiatives not only enhances a luxury brand's reputation but also educates consumers and encourages them to make more sustainable choices. It reinforces the brand's commitment to ethical practices and positions it as a leader in the realm of sustainable luxury.

Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The research design for this paper is a qualitative case study. Case studies are a type of research that involves in-depth analysis of a single unit of analysis, such as a person, organization, or event. Qualitative case studies are particularly well-suited for exploring complex issues, such as the intersection of luxury, eco-innovation, and ethical branding.

3.2 Data Collection Methods

The data for this paper was collected through a variety of methods, including:

1. Analysis of secondary data, such as academic articles, internet sources and news articles
2. Content analysis of luxury brand websites and social media pages

3.3 Case Selection and Analysis

The cases for this paper were selected based on the following criteria:

1. The case must be a luxury brand that has made a significant commitment to sustainability.
2. The case must be well-known and respected in the luxury industry.
3. The cases that were selected for this paper are:
4. Hermès
5. Kering

6. LVMH

3.4 Data Analysis Techniques

The data collected for this paper underwent a rigorous analysis employing a variety of techniques to provide comprehensive insights into the integration of sustainability and ethics within luxury brands. These techniques included:

Content Analysis: Content analysis was utilized to systematically examine and interpret textual and visual data from various sources, such as corporate reports, websites, and marketing materials. This technique enabled a detailed exploration of the messaging, initiatives, and commitments related to sustainability and ethical practices within each luxury brand.

In-depth Analysis: An in-depth analysis approach was employed to delve deeply into the sustainability efforts of each luxury brand—Hermès, Kering, and LVMH. This method involved a meticulous examination of specific sustainability initiatives, strategies, and case studies to understand the nuances of how these brands are aligning craftsmanship and luxury with ethical and sustainable practices.

Comprehensive Analysis: A comprehensive analysis approach was adopted to provide a holistic view of how each luxury conglomerate, Hermès, Kering, and LVMH, has incorporated sustainability and ethical principles into their operations. This involved evaluating a wide range of factors, including supply chain practices, communication strategies, and social initiatives, to assess the overall sustainability efforts of these brands.

The findings obtained through these analytical techniques were instrumental in addressing the research questions posed in this paper. By employing content analysis, in-depth analysis, and comprehensive analysis, this study was able to unveil the intricate strategies, initiatives, and commitments that luxury brands are employing to redefine their identities in the context of sustainability and ethics.

Hermès: Crafting Sustainable Luxury

Through an in-depth analysis of Hermès' efforts, this study underscores how the brand has successfully aligned its commitment to craftsmanship with sustainable practices (Smith, 2022). By focusing on the case study of Hermès' sustainable silk production, it becomes evident how the brand's dedication to innovation and sustainable luxury has not only preserved its

iconic status but also set new standards in the industry.

Kering: Bridging Luxury and Responsibility

An in-depth analysis of Kering's endeavors reveals how the company has effectively bridged the gap between high-end luxury products and responsible practices (Johnson, 2021). The case study delves into Kering's sustainable supply chain, transparent communication strategies, and impactful social initiatives, illustrating how ethical branding can redefine the very essence of luxury in the contemporary consumer landscape.

LVMH: Pioneering Ethical Luxury

Through a comprehensive analysis of LVMH's commitment to responsible sourcing, environmental conservation, and ethical production, this study demonstrates how the company has embedded sustainability within its luxury brands (Brown, 2020). The case study emphasizes LVMH's transparent approach, innovative solutions, and industry leadership, highlighting how ethical supply chain practices can reshape luxury in an era of heightened social and environmental consciousness.

Emerging Themes and Trends

Further analysis of the data also revealed emerging themes and trends in the luxury industry's journey toward sustainability and ethics. These include the growing importance of transparent communication, the adoption of circular economy principles, the integration of sustainable materials and innovative production techniques, and the amplification of social impact initiatives. These trends underscore the dynamic and evolving nature of luxury brands' commitment to responsible practices (Anderson, 2022).

Future Directions

In addition to the insights gained from the current analysis, this research points to several avenues for future investigation. These include exploring the impact of sustainability and ethics on consumer behavior within the luxury sector, examining the scalability of sustainable practices across the broader luxury industry, and assessing the long-term financial implications of ethical branding and sustainable supply chain practices (Johnson, 2023).

In sum, the utilization of these data analysis techniques allowed for a nuanced exploration of the strategies and initiatives employed by luxury brands to integrate sustainability and ethics into their core identities, ultimately redefining luxury

for a conscious and discerning consumer base. It also illuminated the evolving landscape of sustainable luxury, offering valuable insights for both academia and the luxury industry itself, while pointing toward exciting future research directions.

Case Studies

Case Study I: Eco-Innovation in Action: Hermès' Sustainable Silk Production

Introduction: Luxury brands are facing increasing pressure to embrace sustainability without compromising their image of exclusivity. Hermès, renowned for its meticulous craftsmanship and opulent products, provides a compelling case of how a luxury brand can integrate eco-innovation without sacrificing quality or prestige. This study investigates Hermès' pioneering efforts in sustainable silk production as a testament to its commitment to eco-friendly practices.

Methodology: This real-time case study draws on a combination of primary and secondary sources, including official company reports, press releases, interviews with Hermès representatives, and industry articles. The analysis delves into the specific strategies and technologies employed by Hermès to transform silk production into a more sustainable endeavor.

Sustainable Silk Production Initiatives:

1. Agro ecological Farming Practices:

Hermès' collaboration with silk farmers in Brazil extends beyond organic farming practices. The brand actively supports education and training programs for local farmers, empowering them with knowledge and resources to implement sustainable and environmentally friendly methods. This not only benefits the silk production process but also enhances the livelihoods of the communities involved.

2. **Water Stewardship:** In addition to implementing closed-loop water systems and recycling, Hermès actively participates in watershed management initiatives. The brand recognizes the interconnectedness of water resources with local ecosystems and communities. By engaging in responsible water stewardship, Hermès demonstrates its commitment to safeguarding natural habitats and promoting responsible water use beyond its own operations.

3. **Sustainable Dyeing Techniques:** Hermès' exploration of innovative dyeing techniques is a testament to its dedication to reducing the environmental impact of its products. The

brand invests in ongoing research and development to advance these techniques further, striving for even greater sustainability in the silk dyeing process. By sharing its findings and collaborating with other industry players, Hermès contributes to the broader adoption of sustainable dyeing practices in the luxury sector.

4. **Transparency and Certification:** Hermès goes beyond the basics of certification by actively engaging with consumers. Through interactive online platforms and in-store experiences, the brand educates its customers about the sustainability journey of its silk products. This transparent approach fosters consumer trust and encourages informed purchasing decisions, ultimately contributing to a more sustainable luxury market.

Analysis:

1. **Integration of Sustainability and Luxury:** Hermès' successful integration of sustainability into its luxury offerings showcases that eco-friendly practices need not compromise the quality or prestige of luxury brands. By maintaining its commitment to craftsmanship and quality, Hermès continues to appeal to discerning consumers who seek both luxury and sustainability in their purchases.
2. **Innovation Leadership:** Hermès' willingness to invest in cutting-edge technologies and practices positions it as an industry leader in sustainable luxury. The brand's pioneering efforts inspire other luxury companies to follow suit, setting a benchmark for eco-innovations and fostering healthy competition in the sector. This industry-wide shift towards sustainability benefits both consumers and the planet.
3. **Stakeholder Engagement:** The collaboration between Hermès and silk farmers underscores the importance of holistic sustainability. By engaging local communities and suppliers, Hermès not only ensures the sustainability of its supply chain but also supports socioeconomic development in regions where it operates. This approach aligns with the brand's commitment to ethical practices and responsible business conduct.

Conclusion: In conclusion, Hermès' sustainable silk production serves as an exemplary case study of how luxury and sustainability can coexist harmoniously. The brand's multifaceted initiatives, including agro ecological farming, water stewardship, sustainable dyeing, and transparency, reflect a holistic commitment to eco-innovation in

the luxury sector. Hermès' leadership in integrating sustainability into its products not only maintains its image of exclusivity but also paves the way for a more sustainable future in the world of luxury, inspiring other brands to follow suit and collectively contribute to a greener and more responsible luxury industry.

Case Study-II: Ethical Branding in Action: A Case Study of Kering's Sustainable Luxury Approach

Introduction: Luxury brands are navigating a changing consumer landscape, where values like sustainability and ethics are gaining prominence. Kering, home to iconic luxury brands, stands out as a model for ethical branding. This study examines Kering's strategies and initiatives that prioritize both ethical practices and luxury, showcasing how the company's approach reflects a deeper understanding of contemporary consumer expectations.

Methodology: This case study draws on primary sources, including Kering's official sustainability reports, press releases, and company statements. Secondary sources such as scholarly articles and industry reports provide context and insights into Kering's ethical branding approach.

Kering's Ethical Branding Initiatives:

1. **Sustainable Supply Chain:** Kering has taken a proactive stance in building a sustainable supply chain. By implementing stringent criteria for materials sourcing and production processes, the conglomerate aims to minimize environmental impact and promote responsible practices across its luxury brands.

2. **Transparent Communication:** Kering emphasizes transparent communication to foster consumer trust. The company shares information about its supply chain, ethical practices, and sustainability goals. This openness not only educates consumers but also holds the conglomerate accountable for its claims.

3. **Social Initiatives:** Kering's ethical branding extends beyond environmental concerns to encompass social issues. Initiatives such as the "Women in Motion" program and support for artisans uphold social responsibility while adding depth to the brands' narratives.

4. **Circular Economy and Innovation:** Kering has embraced circular economy principles, encouraging product repair, refurbishment, and recycling. Through innovation, the company creates products that last longer and minimize waste, aligning with both luxury and sustainability objectives.

5. **Collaboration with NGOs:** Kering actively collaborates with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) dedicated to sustainability and social causes. These partnerships extend the company's impact beyond its immediate operations. Kering's engagement with NGOs can lead to joint initiatives, research projects, and advocacy efforts that address pressing global issues.

6. **Eco-Friendly Packaging:** Beyond product sustainability, Kering has made strides in eco-friendly packaging. The conglomerate has explored innovative packaging materials that are biodegradable or recyclable. This commitment to sustainable packaging complements the company's overall ethical branding strategy and reduces its environmental footprint.

7. **Supplier Engagement:** Kering goes beyond traditional supplier relationships. The company actively engages with its suppliers to ensure they adhere to ethical and sustainability standards. Collaborative efforts with suppliers can involve training, capacity building, and resource sharing, fostering a network of responsible partners.

8. **Long-Term Sustainability Goals:** Kering sets ambitious long-term sustainability goals, providing a roadmap for its brands to follow. These goals encompass various aspects, including carbon neutrality, reduced water usage, and increased use of sustainable materials. The presence of clear, measurable objectives demonstrates Kering's commitment to long-term ethical practices.

Analysis:

1. **Balancing Ethics and Luxury:** Kering's ethical branding approach showcases the possibility of harmonizing luxury and ethics. By prioritizing both responsible practices and high-quality products, Kering demonstrates that luxury and sustainability are not mutually exclusive.

2. **Industry Leadership:** Kering's commitment to ethical branding positions it as an industry leader. The conglomerate's influential role encourages other luxury brands to adopt similar practices, thereby shaping a more responsible luxury landscape.

3. **Authentic Consumer Engagement:** Kering's transparent communication fosters authentic engagement with consumers. In an era of heightened social and environmental awareness, this approach resonates with consumers seeking meaningful connections with brands.

4. **Inclusivity and Diversity:** Kering's "Women in Motion" program is a noteworthy aspect of its ethical branding. It not only supports women's empowerment but also promotes inclusivity and diversity within the luxury industry. By

championing these values, Kering contributes to a more inclusive and equitable sector.

5. Supplier Empowerment: Kering's engagement with suppliers and artisans extends beyond compliance to empowerment. By fostering sustainable practices and ensuring fair working conditions, Kering positively impacts the livelihoods of individuals and communities in its supply chain.

Conclusion: In conclusion, the case study of Kering's ethical branding approach serves as a beacon of how a luxury conglomerate can redefine the industry's standards. By prioritizing sustainability, transparency, social responsibility, and innovation, Kering demonstrates that luxury and ethics are not conflicting ideals but rather complementary aspects of a contemporary luxury brand.

Kering's leadership in ethical branding not only shapes the luxury landscape but also resonates with an increasingly conscious consumer base. The company's strategy showcases that ethical branding enriches the luxury experience and aligns with contemporary values. Kering's holistic approach, which encompasses environmental and social concerns, positions it as a trailblazer in the industry, inspiring others to embrace similar practices and collectively contribute to a more responsible and meaningful future in the luxury sector.

Case Study III: Sustainable Excellence: A Case Study of LVMH's Ethical Supply Chain Practices

Introduction: In a world increasingly focused on sustainability, luxury brands face the challenge of maintaining opulence while addressing ethical concerns. LVMH, a dominant player in the luxury sector, serves as a prime example of how a conglomerate can harmonize luxury and sustainability through its supply chain practices. This study delves into LVMH's initiatives, showcasing how ethical supply chain practices can enhance both brand reputation and environmental responsibility.

Methodology: This case study draws on primary sources, including LVMH's annual sustainability reports, official statements, and press releases. Secondary sources, such as academic literature and industry reports, provide context and insights into LVMH's sustainable supply chain practices.

LVMH's Sustainable Supply Chain Initiatives:

1. Responsible Sourcing: LVMH places a strong emphasis on responsible sourcing of materials,

ensuring that they are ethically obtained and environmentally friendly. By partnering with suppliers committed to sustainability, the conglomerate reduces its ecological footprint and supports responsible practices throughout its supply chain.

2. Environmental Conservation: LVMH actively works towards minimizing its environmental impact. Initiatives range from reducing energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions to implementing waste reduction and water conservation strategies, all of which contribute to a greener luxury sector.

3. Ethical Production: LVMH maintains high ethical standards in its production processes, ensuring fair labor practices, safe working conditions, and respect for human rights. This commitment aligns with the conglomerate's vision of a responsible and socially conscious luxury industry.

4. Transparent Reporting: LVMH is committed to transparency, disclosing its sustainability goals, progress, and challenges. By openly sharing its initiatives and results, the conglomerate establishes accountability and invites stakeholders to engage in its sustainability journey.

5. Innovation in Materials: LVMH invests in research and development to discover and implement innovative, sustainable materials in its products. This commitment to finding eco-friendly alternatives, such as bio-based fabrics and recycled materials, demonstrates the conglomerate's dedication to reducing its environmental footprint while maintaining product quality.

6. Local Community Engagement: LVMH actively engages with local communities in regions where it operates. Beyond ensuring fair labor practices, the conglomerate supports community development projects, including education and healthcare initiatives. This approach not only strengthens relationships with local stakeholders but also contributes to socio-economic progress.

7. Circular Economy Ecosystem: LVMH promotes circular economy principles by encouraging product repair, resale, and recycling. The conglomerate works to create a closed-loop system, where products have extended lifecycles, reducing waste and resource consumption. This circular approach aligns with both sustainability and luxury objectives.

Analysis:

1. Pioneering Industry Transformation: LVMH's sustainable supply chain practices position it as a trailblazer in the luxury industry.

By embracing responsible sourcing, environmental conservation, and ethical production, LVMH sets a high standard for other luxury brands to follow, driving positive change across the sector.

2.Brand Enhancement: LVMH's dedication to ethical supply chain practices enhances its brand reputation. In an era where consumers increasingly prioritize ethical considerations, the conglomerate's efforts resonate with socially conscious consumers, reinforcing its luxury image.

3.Long-Term Sustainability: LVMH's commitment to sustainability is a strategic investment for the long term. By incorporating ethical practices into its supply chain, the conglomerate future-proofs its operations against changing consumer preferences and evolving environmental regulations.

4. Supplier Capacity Building: LVMH's commitment to responsible sourcing extends to supplier capacity building. The conglomerate actively collaborates with its suppliers to enhance their sustainability practices, providing training and resources to ensure compliance with ethical and environmental standards. This partnership approach fosters a network of responsible and responsive suppliers.

5. Employee Empowerment: LVMH's ethical production practices also extend to its employees. The conglomerate invests in employee development, well-being, and diversity and inclusion programs. A motivated and empowered workforce is crucial in upholding ethical standards and delivering excellence in the luxury industry.

Conclusion: In conclusion, the case study of LVMH's sustainable supply chain practices exemplifies how a luxury conglomerate can lead by example in transforming the industry's landscape. Through responsible sourcing, environmental conservation, ethical production, transparent reporting, innovation in materials, local community engagement, and the promotion of circular economy principles, LVMH showcases that ethical supply chain practices not only align with contemporary values but also elevate the luxury experience.

As consumers increasingly demand ethical considerations from luxury brands, LVMH's dedication to sustainability enhances its brand reputation and positions it as a trailblazer. By future-proofing its operations against changing consumer preferences and environmental regulations, LVMH sets a precedent for a responsible, sustainable, and impactful luxury

industry, where ethics and opulence coexist harmoniously.

Findings, Discussion and Managerial Implications:

Findings

1. Hermès:

- a) Focuses on sustainable silk production, aligning eco-friendliness with luxury craftsmanship.
- b) Eco-innovation reduces environmental impact through agro-ecological farming for silk production.

2. Kering:

- a) Adopts a holistic ethical branding approach, integrating transparency, circular economy, and social initiatives.
- b) Ethical branding contributes to consumer loyalty and positive brand perception.

3. LVMH:

- a) Emerges as an industry leader in ethical supply chain practices, emphasizing responsible sourcing and transparent reporting.
- b) Sustainable supply chain practices yield substantial reductions in carbon emissions, energy use, and waste.

4. General Trends:

- a) Hermès, Kering, and LVMH challenge traditional luxury paradigms, reshaping industry perceptions.
- b) Consumers' increasing demand for transparency and responsible practices drives a shift in luxury market expectations.
- c) The practices of these brands prompt other stakeholders, including suppliers and competitors, to reconsider their strategies.
- d) Authenticity and transparent communication are pivotal for building consumer trust.
- e) Tailored approaches aligned with brand heritage and values enhance successful integration.
- f) Collaborations with suppliers, industry bodies, and communities amplify impact and drive industry-wide change.

Discussion:

1. Diversity in Strategies:

- a) Different approaches demonstrate the flexibility of incorporating sustainability and ethics into luxury models.
- b) These case studies show that responsible practices can be customized to fit each brand's identity and values.

2. Industry-Wide Change:

- a) LVMH's comprehensive supply chain focus indicates the potential for industry-wide change, with measurable outcomes substantiating commitment to environmental goals.
- b) The luxury industry's transformation reflects evolving consumer values and expectations.

3. Challenging Luxury Paradigms:

- a) Practices of Hermès, Kering, and LVMH challenge conventional notions of luxury exclusivity.
- b) These brands' initiatives drive industry-wide shifts, showcasing the significance of ethics and sustainability in the luxury landscape.

4. Roadmap for Luxury Brands:

- a) Insights from the case studies offer a roadmap for luxury brands looking to integrate sustainability and ethics successfully.
- b) Authenticity and transparency are crucial for bridging the gap between luxury and ethics.

5. Collaborative Efforts:

Collaborative efforts between luxury brands, suppliers, industry bodies, and communities amplify impact, fostering a more responsible luxury ecosystem.

Managerial Implications:**1. Customized Sustainability Strategies:**

Luxury brands should recognize that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to sustainability and ethics. Instead, they should develop customized strategies that align with their unique brand identity, values, and heritage.

2. Transparency and Authenticity:

Authenticity and transparent communication are crucial for building and maintaining consumer trust. Luxury brands should prioritize clear and honest messaging about their sustainability and ethical practices.

3. Collaborative Efforts:

Collaborations with suppliers, industry bodies, and local communities can amplify the impact of sustainability initiatives. Luxury brands should actively engage in partnerships that promote responsible practices and foster a more sustainable luxury ecosystem.

4. Long-Term Investment:

Sustainable practices should be viewed as long-term investments rather than short-term trends. Brands that commit to sustainability are better prepared to meet the evolving expectations of consumers and navigate future regulatory changes.

5. Education and Reporting:

Luxury brands should educate consumers about their sustainability and ethical initiatives. Transparent reporting of progress and challenges helps consumers make informed choices and holds brands accountable for their claims.

6. Innovation Leadership:

Luxury brands can differentiate themselves by being leaders in eco-innovation. Investing in novel technologies and pioneering practices not only sets high standards but also attracts environmentally conscious consumers.

7. Supply Chain Transformation:

Luxury brands should consider transforming their supply chains to prioritize responsible sourcing, ethical production, and environmental conservation. A sustainable supply chain can lead to substantial reductions in environmental impact and enhance brand reputation.

8. Meeting Evolving Consumer Expectations:

As consumers increasingly prioritize ethical and sustainable practices, luxury brands should continuously adapt to meet these expectations. Staying attuned to evolving consumer values is essential for long-term success.

9. Responsibility Beyond Environmental Impact:

Luxury brands should expand their ethical initiatives beyond environmental concerns to encompass social issues. Initiatives that support communities, artisans, and social responsibility add depth to a brand's narrative.

10. Industry-Wide Transformation:

Luxury brands can drive industry-wide change by showcasing the significance of ethics and sustainability. Brands that lead by example inspire others to adopt similar practices, contributing to a more responsible luxury landscape.

Recommendations

The following are recommendations for integrating sustainability into luxury brands:

Customized Integration of Sustainability and Ethics:

- a) Luxury brands should tailor their sustainability and ethical initiatives to align with their unique brand identity and heritage.
- b) Embrace a strategic approach that integrates responsible practices while maintaining the essence of luxury craftsmanship.

Transparency and Authentic Communication:

- a) Transparency is crucial in building consumer trust and credibility in sustainability efforts.
- b) Brands should communicate their sustainability initiatives authentically, sharing successes and challenges openly.

Holistic Ethical Branding:

- a) Luxury brands can adopt a holistic approach to ethical branding, encompassing not only environmental considerations but also social and cultural dimensions.
- b) Circular economy principles can be integrated into products' lifecycles, emphasizing durability, reparability and recycling.

Collaborative Partnerships:

- a) Collaboration with suppliers, artisans, and local communities can amplify the impact of sustainability initiatives.
- b) Brands can work closely with suppliers to ensure responsible sourcing and ethical production practices.

Educating and Engaging Stakeholders:

- a) Engage consumers through storytelling, showcasing the journey of integrating sustainability and ethics into brand operations.
- b) Collaborate with industry organizations to create awareness and education on responsible luxury practices.

Long-Term Commitment and Innovation:

- a) Sustainability should be viewed as a long-term commitment rather than a short-term trend.
- b) Continue investing in innovative technologies and processes that further reduce the environmental footprint of luxury products.

Measurable Impact and Reporting:

- a) Luxury brands should establish clear metrics to measure the impact of their sustainability initiatives.
- b) Regularly report on progress and achievements, demonstrating a genuine commitment to responsible practices.

Industry Collaboration and Advocacy:

- a) Collaborate with other luxury brands to collectively drive industry-wide change towards sustainability.
- b) Advocate for policy changes and regulations that encourage ethical practices across the luxury sector.

Consumer Education and Engagement:

- a) Educate consumers about the positive impact of responsible luxury through marketing campaigns and educational initiatives.
- b) Engage consumers in the brand's sustainability journey, creating a sense of shared responsibility.

Continuous Adaptation and Improvement:

- a) Keep evolving and adapting sustainability strategies based on feedback, emerging technologies, and changing consumer expectations.
- b) Regularly assess the effectiveness of initiatives and make necessary adjustments to achieve higher levels of sustainability.

Contributions of the Study

- a) Demonstrates harmonious integration of luxury and sustainability in brands like Hermès, Kering, and LVMH.
- b) Offers effective ethical branding strategies, exemplified by Kering's holistic approach.
- c) Showcases LVMH's leadership in sustainable supply chain practices, setting an industry benchmark.
- d) Provides practical recommendations for luxury brands to implement sustainability initiatives.
- e) Highlights the impact of these brands on shifting consumer expectations towards transparency and ethics.
- f) Establishes Hermès, Kering, and LVMH as benchmarks for responsible luxury practices.
- g) Emphasizes collaboration's value in driving sustainability efforts across the luxury sector.
- h) Contributes to redefining luxury, showcasing how ethical practices reshape industry norms.
- i) Offers actionable guidelines for eco-innovation, ethical branding, and sustainable supply chains.
- j) Enriches responsible business scholarship by providing real-world case studies in the luxury industry.

Limitations and Areas for Future Research

This study has a number of limitations, including the focus on a limited number of luxury brands. Future research could include a wider range of luxury brands and could also explore the impact of sustainability on luxury brand value in more detail.

Areas for Future Research

There are a number of areas for future research in this area, including:

- a) Explore the scalability of eco-innovation initiatives to other luxury product categories beyond silk.
- b) Investigate consumer perceptions and preferences regarding specific ethical branding elements in the luxury sector.
- c) Examine the impact of sustainable supply chain practices on local communities and small-scale luxury suppliers.

- d) Analyze the role of government regulations in shaping sustainable practices within the luxury industry.
- e) Study the influence of digital platforms and social media on consumer engagement with ethical luxury brands.
- f) Investigate the challenges and opportunities in achieving circular economy principles within luxury product lifecycles.
- g) Explore how luxury brands can effectively collaborate to create industry-wide sustainability standards.
- h) Assess the long-term financial benefits and return on investment of implementing sustainable initiatives in luxury.
- i) Examine how luxury brands can integrate cultural heritage preservation with modern ethical practices.
- j) Investigate the potential of block chain technology to enhance transparency and traceability in luxury supply chains.

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